
TO: Dr. Julie Gerberding

FROM: Mark Fleming
3909 27th Ave South
Seattle, WA 98108

SUBJECT: Oppose New CDC Regulations

DATE: July 7, 2004 12:07 AM

Dear Dr. Gerberding:

I am writing both as a person living with HIV and as a professional health care worker. I urge you to withdraw the proposed new CDC regulations that threaten proven effective HIV prevention efforts. Rather than promote comprehensive, science based prevention methods, these guidelines blatantly disregard tried and true programs, taking decision making powers away from the groups most familiar with the at-risk populations and placing it instead in the hands of ideologically motivated political appointees. To let an area as important as public health (and that's what this is) be governed by religious groups who push an agenda that isn't useful or realistic for many of the populations that are most devastated by HIV/AIDS.

Further detrimental is the required inclusion of information on the ineffectiveness of condom use in preventing the spread of HIV and other STDs, regardless of the fact that most medical bodies state that in the absence of an HIV-preventing vaccine, the condom is the single most effective tool available to protect someone from contracting or spreading HIV. This strikes me as more non-science based decision making. Condoms are exceptionally effective in stopping the spread of HIV, gonorrhea and chlamydia and greatly reduce the possibilities of syphilis, herpes and HPV. Teaching about condoms does not encourage sexual activity, just as many studies show that abstinence only programs do not lower the rate. Rather it is essential that the CDC continue to support models that are comprehensive in nature, catering to differing need and lifestyles. To ignore the needs for different messages dooms millions of people to contracting HIV due to ignorance and religious nonsense. I expect to hear how you act upon this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark Fleming